

Worksession

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| Agenda Item # | 8 |
| Meeting Date | October 18, 2004 |
| Prepared By | Brett Linkletter City Arborist |
| Approved By | Barbara B. Matthews City Manager |

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| Discussion Item | Maple Avenue Tree Replacement |
| Background | <p>Over the last 3 years several residents have approached the City Arborist about replacing the public property pin oaks (under the power lines) on Maple Avenue from the DC line to Philadelphia Avenue. The problem is pin oaks get large and their habit is to have a strong central leader. These characteristics make them inappropriate for planting under utility lines and forces utility line clearance projects to severely cut back these trees. This leaves the trees “topped” at the main stem, which from a tree health perspective is undesirable and can facilitate decay and drastically shorten the life of the trees. From an aesthetic perspective, the trees look badly misshapen and will never grow to their potential size. From a utility perspective, the trees become high maintenance, and must be pruned every utility line clearance pruning cycle.</p> <p>PEPCO became aware of the situation and offered to pay for the removal of the trees if the City of Takoma Park replaced them with a smaller species of tree that will not come into conflict with their power lines. This offer has no time parameters to it but has the stipulation that they will pay for the removal only if all of the trees along this stretch are removed, not just some of them. The reason is PEPCO would have to keep coming back to this three block stretch every two years if not all of the conflicting (or potentially conflicting) trees are replaced, thus defeating the purpose of the exercise.</p> <p>In late June the City Arborist attended a Maple Avenue citizen group meeting and explained all these issues and also stated that the tree replacement was just an idea that was being discussed. It was also communicated in the meeting that this was in no way a “done deal” and would not move forward without more discussion and citizen input.</p> <p>Per instructions from the September 7th discussion of this issue, there were three items to investigate and report on.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The City Arborist contacted PEPCO about the possibility of PEPCO absorbing the cost of grinding the stumps of the removed trees. PEPCO stated that they would not do this because they had never done that in the past and did not want to set a precedent now. 2. The only other area of Takoma Park that was found to closely compare to the “pin oaks under power lines” situation we have on Maple Avenue is a stretch of Richie Avenue from Geneva Avenue to Maple Avenue. This area contains 14 pin oaks (larger than the trees on Maple Avenue) that have been severely topped. There are |

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| | <p>many other areas of the city where the interface of trees and power lines have caused trees to be misshapen due to utility pruning, but it usually is a few trees in a row, not a whole block.</p> <p>3. The amount of money in the Tree Replacement fund is estimated at approximately \$29,000; these funds are intended to be used for the purchase and planting of new trees. The FY05 budget for replacement of right-of-way and park trees for the whole city is \$10,000. Of this amount, \$2,660 has been spent.</p> |
| Policy | Create better urban forestry health and enhance the aesthetics for the long term along the right-of-way of this section of Maple Avenue. |
| Fiscal Impact | Approximately 40 new trees would cost \$12,000 installed. Removal of the 23 stumps from the existing trees would cost approximately \$4,000. |
| Attachments | Information on existing trees along the right-of-way of Maple Avenue (DC line to Philadelphia Avenue). |
| Recommendation | Review and discuss replacement and monetary options. |
| Special Consideration | |

Maple Avenue trees and addresses
(east-side right-of-way from DC line to Philadelphia Avenue)

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| 7123 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7125 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7127 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7129 Maple Ave. | pin oak (10") |
| 7131 Maple Ave. | pin oak (12") |
| 7133 Maple Ave. | pin oak (14") |
| 7135 Maple Ave. | pin oak (9") |
| 7137 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7139 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| Church | no trees |
| 7207 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7209 Maple Ave. | pin oak (3") |
| 7211 Maple Ave. | pin oak (5") |
| 7213 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7215 Maple Ave. | white oak (2") |
| 7217 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7219 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7301 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7305 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7307 Maple Ave. | pin oak (11") |
| 7309 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7311 Maple Ave. | pin oak (10") |
| 7313 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7315 Maple Ave. | pin oak (5") |
| 7315 Maple Ave. | pin oak (8") |
| 7315 Maple Ave. | pin oak (7") |
| 7401 Maple Ave. | pin oak (10") |
| 7401 Maple Ave. | pin oak (11") |
| 7403 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7405 Maple Ave. | pin oak (9") |
| 7407 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7409 Maple Ave. | pin oak (15") |
| 7411 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7413 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 1 Valley View Ave. | no trees |
| 7417 Maple Ave. | no trees |
| 7419 Maple Ave. | zelkova (12") |
| 7421 Maple Ave. | no trees |

Observations:

- 15 properties have no trees in right-of-way.
- 23 trees total on this right-of-way stretch of Maple Avenue.
- 21 pin oaks on street with all but one 3" diameter tree at 7209 Maple Ave. having experienced severe utility pruning.
- One zelkova at 7419 Maple Ave. has significant utility pruning, but because of the vase-like shape and diffuse canopy of the tree, the utility pruning has had a lesser impact than with the other trees.
- One white oak at 7215 Maple Ave. is too small to have been impacted by the utility lines but will be impacted in the future. If the project goes through, this tree could be moved.
- The right-of-way planting strip is 3 feet wide to 4 feet wide.
- None of the trees have impacted the sidewalks.
- At least 40 trees of a smaller species could be planted in the right-of-way.